

Sir Ivan Fire Recovery Committee Community Newsletter

Edition 9, 16 June 2017

Recovery Support Service

Many people have already been in contact with the **Recovery Support Workers**, but for those of you who haven't please let us introduce Sue Freebairn and Caroline Hayes..



Sue Freebairn

0429 212 368

sue.freebairn@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Sue has spent the majority of her career in nursing, serving as Director of Nursing at Coinda Coonabarabran for 25 years until her retirement. In 2013, in the wake of the Wambelong Bushfire, Sue started working with the Department of Primary Industry's (DPI's) **Rural Resilience Program** to provide support to those affected by the fire and the enduring drought. More recently, Sue has worked part-time as a **Rural Financial Counsellor** which has provided time for Sue to pursue her love of the land by co-managing a farm at Purlawaugh with her husband Bob. Sue is pleased to be back with the **Rural Resilience Program** and providing support to people affected by the Sir Ivan Fire.

Sue's role as a **Recovery Support Worker** will include listening to the issues people are having after the fire, sourcing the support and information required and linking this back to provide positive outcomes. Together with Caroline Hayes, Sue will act as single point of contact for fire affected people and communities.



Caroline Hayes

0407 971 675

caroline.hayes@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Caroline grew up in England developing a love of all things rural. She studied Agricultural Marketing and Business and later completed a Masters of Business Administration through University of New England in Armidale.

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Recovery Support Service

For more information or to make an appointment with a

Recovery Support Worker

contact the **Recovery Line** on **(02) 6377 1122** or call Caroline Hayes on **0407 971 675** or Sue Freebairn on **0429 212 368**.

Caroline has worked on many farms in England and Australia, and after selling her own successful business Caroline was able to combine her skills and interest in agricultural as well as people by commencing a nine (9) year career as a **Rural Financial Counsellor**. Caroline has facilitated many family meetings, provided support to farmers through a variety of events and assisted families with farm transitions. For the past two years Caroline has worked with the DPI's **Rural Resilience Program** and **Dairy NSW**.

Income Assistance

Income assistance is available to farmers and their families who are experiencing financial hardship via the **Farm Household Allowance (FHA)**. Eligibility criteria apply and an eligible couple are entitled to receive around \$480 each per fortnight for up to three (3) years.

The best option is not to self-assess but to contact the **Rural Financial Counselling Service** on **1800 940 404** for assistance to understand / work through the eligibility criteria and the application process. Information is also available online at www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/farm-household-allowance. Where farmers have already received the **Farm Household Allowance** assistance for three (3) years, unfortunately, the current assistance packages available don't include any further income help. However, these people will most likely will be entitled to assistance from the **Rural Financial Counselling Service**.

Again, don't self-assess - contact the **Rural Financial Counselling Service** on **1800 940 404** or discuss your options with your **FHA Case Officer**.

Rebuilding after the Sir Ivan Fire

Warrumbungle Shire Council has a **Bushfire Rebuilding Team** which offers professional advice to assist you in obtaining the appropriate approvals for constructing replacement buildings. The team provides a 'one-stop shop' for advice about approvals associated with planning, building and wastewater treatment and disposal. Part of Council's Regulatory Services Division, the **Bushfire Rebuilding Team** includes a town planner, building certifier and an environmental health officer.

The officers involved in meetings with residents will also be the officers involved in assessing applications lodged with Council. This means they will have a good level of knowledge about the application and also the applicants. When you are ready to start the rebuilding process, contact Council's **Regulatory Services Division** on (02) 6849 2000. You will be asked to provide some personal details so that a member of **Bushfire Rebuilding Team** can get in touch and arrange a time to meet. Council's **Bushfire Rebuilding Team** will also be in the Coolah Office, and will be available for meetings on the following dates:

- 22/6/17, 9:30am – 11:30am
- 29/6/17, 9:30am – 11:30am
- 6/7/17, 9:30am – 11:30am

Call (02) 6849 2000 to book a time.

BlazeAid update

Cassilis

The **Cassilis BlazeAid Camp** will close on **Sunday, 25 June 2017**.

Since commencing work almost four (4) months ago, the BlazeAid volunteers based at the **Cassilis Bowling Club** have pulled down and rebuilt over 180km of fencing.

Since opening the camp at the end of February, 260 volunteers, some staying for one (1) day, others staying for several months, have worked more than 2,300 volunteer days.

Any properties still requiring assistance with essential fencing can contact the **Dunedoo BlazeAid Camp** which is set up at the Dunedoo Showground.

Contact details for the Dunedoo camp are:

Laurie Dawson, 0418 349 317
blazeaid.dunedoo@gmail.com

Dunedoo

Coordinator of the **Dunedoo BlazeAid Camp**, Laurie Dawson, has told us he often gets asked "how long will BlazeAid continue to operate at Dunedoo".

Laurie tells us the answer can't be definitive or indefinite but, while there is work (and that isn't likely to dry up any time soon), and BlazeAid have volunteers willing to work, and BlazeAid continues to receive community and Government support to cater for the volunteers, they will endeavour to remain in place and contribute to the reconstruction effort.

Laurie has let us know that the cold weather definitely affects volunteer numbers but they are still averaging up to 50 in camp.

With the Cassilis Camp closing on Sunday, 25 June 2017, the Dunedoo Camp will now also be servicing that area. It is a big ask, but as Laurie says, "where there is a will there will be a way".

Merriwa Sir Ivan Fire Appeal

The **Merriwa Sir Ivan Fire Appeal** was established by the **Merriwa Branch of NSW Farmers** who joined forces with **Merriwa Show Society** to do something to assist landholders and residents affected by the fire. The local and broader farming community quickly jumped on board donating cattle, money, grain transport, products and services. **Application Forms** are now available on the NSW Farmers website at www.nswfarmers.org.au under the **2017 Bushfire Appeal** icon. An **Application Form** will also be sent via email with this Edition of the newsletter.

Warrumbungle Shire Mayor's Bushfire Appeal

Community members affected by the Sir Ivan Fire who wish to access funds from the Mayor's Appeal can do so by getting in touch with one of the organisations listed below; or making an application directly to the Mayor's Appeal.

- BlazeAid – 0418 349 317
- St Vincent de Paul (Dunedoo) – 0427 751 461 or 6375 1461
- St Vincent de Paul (Coolah) – 6377 1160
- Dunedoo CWA – 0428 751 173

Taking care of your health and wellbeing

Western NSW Local Health District recommends you visit your health care provider to have a Fluvax every year, to protect you from Influenza.

This is especially important if you have a chronic health condition such as asthma or other chronic respiratory disease, cardiac problems, kidney disease, cancer or immune suppression conditions.

While you're there, take the time to discuss other health issues or get your yearly checks planned.

Dr Rob's Six Tips for Disaster Recovery

Earlier during the recovery process, clinical psychologist Dr Rob Gordon visited Coolah to spend time talking to community members affected by the Sir Ivan Fire. Dr Gordon has spent the past 30 years working with people affected by emergencies and disasters. In this talk, Dr Rob Gordon talks about six tips for disaster recovery. Tips include:

- A fast recovery isn't necessarily a good recovery.
- Take time to assess your energy levels.
- Ensure you maintain control of your own recovery.
- Ask yourself, "what am I not doing that I used to do?"
- Maintain or create established daily or weekly routines.
- Deal with small problems before they become bigger.

To find out more, check out the video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlvwaDg97XM>

Useful contacts

Recovery Support Workers

Recovery Line on (02) 6377 1122
Caroline Hayes on 0407 971 675
Sue Freebairn on 0429 212 368

Financial Counselling

RFCSCR – 1800 940 404
RFC Mudgee
Elizabeth Brown – 0427 726 660
RFC Servicing Coolah
Susan Kelley – 0439 323 443
Website: www.rfcscr.com.au
Email: ceo@rfcscr.com.au

Newsletter Suggestions

If there is information that you would like to see included in the **Recovery Committee Community Newsletter** call the **Recovery Line** on **(02) 6377 1122**.

Newsletter Subscription

Would you or someone you know like to receive this Newsletter directly? The Newsletter can be emailed or posted out. To receive the Newsletter directly, call the **Recovery Line** on **(02) 6377 1122** with your email / postal address, or send an email to info@warrumbungle.nsw.gov.au with the title **Recovery Committee Community Newsletter Subscription**.

This Newsletter is produced by the **Sir Ivan Fire Recovery Committee**, with contributions from support agencies whose services are featured.

Past editions of the Community Newsletter can be accessed via Warrumbungle Shire Council's website. Click on the **Sir Ivan Fire Information** icon at www.warrumbungle.nsw.gov.au.